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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.8, as amended in document A/49/L.12

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 7 to 11 of draft resolution A/49/L.8, as amended in document A/49/L.12, the General Assembly would:

(a) Take note of the creation, in the context of the current reorganization of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, of a Mine Action Section which, with the support of other Secretariat units, especially the technical expertise provided by the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, is responsible for carrying out the functions of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a focal point, with a view to serving as a coordinating body for all the activities performed by Member States and governmental and non-governmental organizations at the national, subregional and international levels in the fields of mine-awareness, training surveys, mine clearance, scientific research for mine-clearance technology and provision of prostheses for adults and children who are victims of land-mines and explosive devices;

(b) Call upon Member States and governmental and non-governmental organizations that have the ability to do so to promote, as a matter of priority, scientific research aimed at the rapid advancement of mine-clearance technology;

(c) Request the Secretary-General to convene, in 1995, an international meeting of experts on assistance in mine clearance, in order to promote the work of the United Nations and international cooperation in the field;

(d) Urge Member States, regional organizations and governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with all information and data as well as other pertinent resources which could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine-clearance activities;

(e) Request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly before its fiftieth session a report covering the activities of the United Nations on assistance in mine-clearance activities during the previous year and especially the operation of the voluntary trust fund.

B. Relationship of the requests to the programme of work

2. The above requests are related to major programme VII (Human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian affairs), programme 37 (Emergency humanitarian assistance), subprogramme 1 (Policy planning and development), of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, 1/ and its proposed revisions (A/49/6 (Prog. 37)). They are also related to section 23 (Department of Humanitarian Affairs), subprogramme 1 (Policy planning and development), of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. 2/

C. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

3. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would convene, in 1995, an international meeting of experts on assistance in mine clearance, in order to promote the work of the United Nations and international cooperation in this field. For that purpose, it is envisaged that one session of five working days would be held in New York in the first quarter of 1995. It is anticipated that 15 experts would be selected by the Secretary-General, serving in their individual capacity. In addition, it is expected that up to 50 participants would be experts actively involved in this field, designated by interested Governments. Participants would also include experts in mine clearance, detection and awareness, sponsored by the international, governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned.

4. Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would submit to the General Assembly before its fiftieth session, a report covering the activities of the United Nations on assistance in mine-clearance activities.

D. Additional requirements at full cost

5. Implementation of the requests contained in operative paragraphs 7 to 11 of draft resolution A/49/L.8, as amended in document A/49/L.12, would entail the following costs:

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(a) Conference-servicing costs	
(i) Pre-session documentation (50 pages, 4 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	51 600
(ii) Meeting servicing (Interpretation: A,C,E,F,R,S)	62 000
(iii) In-session documentation (10 pages, 3 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	12 300
(iv) Post-session documentation (10 pages, 2 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	11 500
Total	137 400
(b) Non-conference-servicing costs	
Travel and subsistence for 15 experts (serving in their individual capacity)	70 000
Total	70 000

E. Potential for absorption

6. The resources provided under section 25E (Conference services) of the programme budget for 1994-1995 include provision not only for meetings already in the calendar of conferences, but also for meetings to be added later by decisions of the General Assembly, based on the pattern of such meetings in the past. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the provision of conference services for the meeting of experts on mine clearance, totalling $137,400, would be made available from within the resources programmed under section 25E of the programme budget. Thus, no additional requirements for conference servicing would arise.

7. No provision has been made under section 23 (Department of Humanitarian Affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 to cover the estimated additional non-conference-servicing requirements of $70,000. Therefore, it is not anticipated that this amount could be absorbed from within the provision for section 23, and additional resources of $70,000 would be required under section 23 of the programme budget.

F. Contingency fund

8. It will be recalled that, under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under that procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or by modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities have to be deferred to a later biennium. A consolidated statement of all programme budget implications and revised estimates will be submitted to the Assembly towards the end of its current session.

9. No activity has been identified for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification under section 23 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Should it not prove possible to meet the required costs from the contingency fund, the implementation of the draft resolution may have to be postponed, as provided for in the criteria for use of the contingency fund adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/211 of 21 December 1987.

G. Summary

10. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/49/L.8, as amended in document A/49/L.12, it is estimated that an additional appropriation of $70,000 would be required under section 23 (Department of Humanitarian Affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1), vol. II.

2/ Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/48/6/Rev.1), vol. II.